

Islam: An Introduction

Islam

- Islam = Peace or surrendering
- Monotheistic
- Prophets - Muhammad last prophet
- Divine scriptures defining
- Last Judgment
 - "The unbelievers among the People of the Book and the pagans shall burn for ever in the fire of Hell"*
- God's will supreme

In the beginning...

- Allah created earth in Genesis
- Adam -> Noah -> Shem (Semite) -> Abraham -> Sarah -> Isaac (Jewish faith)
- Isaac stayed in Palestine
- Abraham -> Hagar -> Ishmael (Islam faith)

In the beginning...

- Ishmael went to where Mecca was to rise
 - Hagar and Ishmael were banished after Isaac was born



Muhammad

- 610 A.D. Angel Gabriel speaks to him
- "You are the appointed one"
- The final prophet, the "seal of the prophets"
- Received Qur'an
 - Considered his miracle

From Refugee...

- 610 C.E. Fled to Medina, converted town
- "City of the prophet"
- Migration = Hijra
- Muslim calendar
- First community connected by faith

...To Conqueror

- Masterful politician
- Ideal blend of justice and mercy
- Made peace for five tribes (including three Jewish)
- Returned to Mecca 8 years later as conqueror
- Died 632 A. D. (10 A.H. After the Hijra)

Texts/Laws

- Sharia - Islamic law, draws no distinction between religious and secular life
- Qur'an - Words of God as told by Muhammad. Fixed impurities in other docs (i.e. Bible)
- Hadith - Sayings, teachings, and accounts of Muhammad

The Five Pillars

- The Shahadah - "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet."
- Prayer- Five times a day
- Charity/Alms
- Ramadan - Islam's holy month
- Pilgrimage to Mecca - At least once during lifetime

Jihad

- Sometimes called sixth pillar
- More than "holy war"
- A struggle to achieve the ways of Allah
- Modern extremists use concept to rationalize and legitimize acts

General Divisions

Sunnis

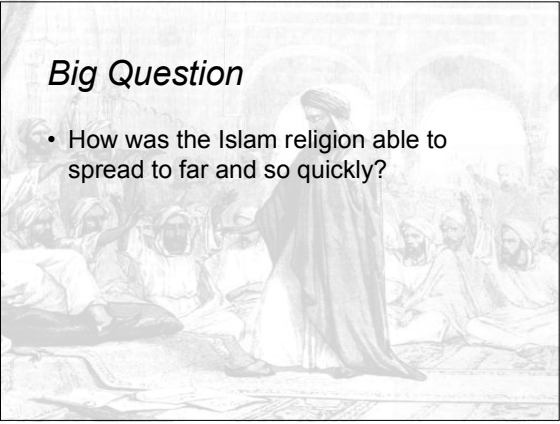
- About 85% of Muslims
- Leaders chosen through consensus
- The sharia was codified and closed by 10th century

Shi'ites/Shia/Shii

- About 15% of Muslims
- Islam's leader should be a descendent of Mohammad
- Religious leaders have authority to interpret sharia

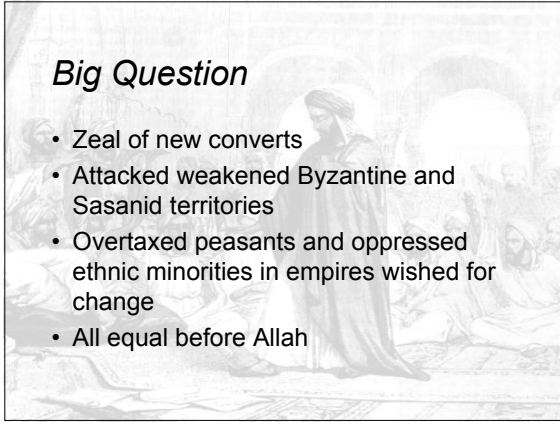
Significance?

- Youngest universal faith
- 8th century to Renaissance, Arabic the language of mathematics and science
- Through political authority of dar-al-Islam and the sharia, Islam developed into a way of life derived from religious principles.



Big Question

- How was the Islam religion able to spread to far and so quickly?



Big Question

- Zeal of new converts
- Attacked weakened Byzantine and Sasanid territories
- Overtaxed peasants and oppressed ethnic minorities in empires wished for change
- All equal before Allah